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## THE SINGLE HOUND



# THE SINGLE HOUND

POEMS OF A LIFETIME

BY

EMILY DICKINSON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HER NIECE  
MARTHA DICKINSON BIANCHI



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## THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE romantic friendship of my Aunt Emily Dickinson and her "Sister Sue" extended from girlhood until death. The first poem, dated, was sent in 1848, and probably the last word Aunt Emily ever wrote was her reply to a message from my Mother, "My answer is an unmitigated Yes, Sue." During the last year of my Mother's life she read and re-read these poems, and innumerable letters, with increasing indecision as to the final disposition of her treasury. It eventually devolved upon me to choose between burning them or giving them to the lovers of my Aunt's peculiar genius.

My hesitation was finally influenced by a note written in their early twenties, which I quote.

DEAR SUE:

I like your praise because I know it knows.  
If I could make you and Austin proud some day  
a long way off, 'twould give me taller feet.

EMILY.

This is my inspiration for a volume, offered as a memorial to the love of these "Dear, dead Women."

Also, it seemed but fitting to reveal a phase of Aunt Emily known only to us who dwelt with her behind the hedge; the fascinating, wilful woman, lightning and fragrance in one.

I am told she is taught in colleges as a rare strange being; a weird recluse, eating her heart out in morbid and unhappy longing, or a victim of unsatisfied passion; I have heard her called "an epigrammatic Walt Whitman" by a noted lecturer, and only recently a distinguished foreign critic pronounced her "the greatest mystic America has produced — second only to Ralph Waldo Emerson."

But to her niece and nephews she was of fairy lineage, akin to the frost on the nursery pane in Winter or the humming bird of Midsummer; the realization of our vivid fancy, the confederate in every contraband desire, the very Spirit of the "Never, Never Land."

She adored us, her three Child-Lovers, talked to us as if we were grown up and our opinions

of importance, our secrets portentous, though always keeping herself our playmate with such art that she remains in my memory as a little girl herself. Once, when my brother Ned, as a child, stood looking up at the evening star, he said wistfully, "I want to go up there, Aunt Emily." "All right," she cried, "Go get your horse and buggy and we'll go tonight!" Often quoting afterward his grave rebuke of her levity — "Aunt Emily, — you can't go up there in a horse and buggy!"

When we were happy she added her crumb, when we were ill all she had was ours, were we grieved, her indignation was hot against whoever or whatever had wounded us. I thought of her as the avenging angel then, her eyes smouldered so gloriously at our wrongs. One other charm was unique to her; her way of flitting, like a shadow upon the hillside, a motion known to no other mortal. In the midst of one of our Eden-hours, she would fly at the sound of an intruder and was not — only the tick of the old clock left for our companioning. I was usually left with her while both families went to church

on Sabbath mornings and well remember being escorted by her down to the cool hoarding cellar, past the wine closet to a mysterious cupboard of her own, where she dealt me such lawless cake and other goodies, that even a child of four knew it for excess, sure to be followed by disaster later in the day. There was an unreal abandon about it all such as thrills the prodigality of dreaming.

As we grew older her wit was our unconscious standard of others, her pitiless directness of thought our revelation, while her sweetness was like nothing but that of her own favorite jasmine flowers. Indeed she resembled the Cape Jasmine more than any mortal being. They two were the whitest Sisters, or flowers, Nature ever bore.

Once let us get to her,—past what Mr. Henry James calls “an archaic Irish servant,” past our other faithful but prejudiced Aunt Lavinia, who gave us a plain cookey and advised us to “run home,”—once within the forbidden precincts of the “front part” of the old mansion, we had found our South-West passage and were

transported, obstinate, oblivious. To water her plants with her tiny watering pot, to help her ice a loaf of plum cake for her Father's supper, to watch her check off the rich dark caramels she unfailingly kept on hand for us, to share her wickedness in skirmishing to avoid outsiders, or to connive in her intrigue to outwit the cat of perpetual unpopularity in her esteem, — what other joys could drag us from these?

She put more excitement into the event of a dead fly than her neighbors got from a journey by stage-coach to Boston. If art is "*exaggeration apropos*," as Mérimée claims, she was an incomparable artist at life.

There was nothing forbidden us by her, in spite of which license we were as shy of troubling her, as gentle in our play with her, as if she had been Hans Andersen's little Snow Maiden and might melt before our eyes if misunderstood.

Fascination was her element. It was my brother Ned, borne home against his will, screaming "I want a rich! I *will* see my Aunt

Emily! I will have a rich!" who provided that dear Villain with a synonym for her own terms with Life. "A rich" was the desire of her heart, "a rich" was her instinctive claim, and she would not compromise.

The poems here included were written on any chance slip of paper, sometimes the old plaid Quadrille, sometimes a gilt-edged sheet with a Paris mark, often a random scrap of commercial note from her Father's law office. Each of these is folded over, addressed merely "Sue," and sent by the first available hand. For though they lived side by side with only a wide green lawn between, days and even weeks slipped by sometimes without their actual meeting. My Mother was blessedly busy in her home and Aunt Emily's light across the snow in the Winter gloaming, or burning late when she remained up all night, to protect her plants from chill, was often a mute greeting between them supplemented only by their written messages. There must have been a lure for the almost cloistered soul in the warmth of her only brother Austin's youthful home, and the radiant atmosphere of

my Mother with her three children growing up about her. "Only Woman in the World," "Avalanche of Sun," "Sister of Ophir," she calls her. In these earlier days Aunt Emily often came over, most frequently in the evening, and always when Mr. Bowles, Mrs. Anthon of London, or some such cherished guest, was here. She played brilliantly upon the piano, and travestied the descriptive pieces popular at that period with as much skill as wit. One improvisation which she called *the Devil* was, by tradition, unparalleled. She had no idea of the passing of time when at the height of these frolics and not until my revered Grandfather appeared with his lantern, would the revel break off. Him she adored, feared, made fun of, and obeyed. "If Father is asleep on the sofa the house is full, though it were empty otherwise!" was one of her familiar exclamations. It could never be said of her, as she said of a prosaic friend, "He has the facts but not the phosphorescence of learning!" One evening when Dr. and Mrs. Holland had arrived unexpectedly to pass the night, having driven over from North-

hampton in the Autumn dusk, my Grandmother, anxious for their every comfort, offered one solicitous suggestion after another, until Aunt Emily, always exasperated by repetition, cried — “O Mrs. Holland, don’t you want to hear me say the Lord’s prayer? Should n’t you like me to repeat the Declaration of Independence? Shan’t I recite the Ten Commandments?”

It was in this mood that she once put four superfluous kittens on the fire-shovel and softly dropped them into the first convenient jar the cellar offered, her family being in church — her chosen time for iniquity. This especial jar happened to be full of pickle brine. The sequel was very awful; occurring when the austere Judge Otis P. Lord of Salem was visiting my Grandfather, and as in all such emergencies of detection she fled to her own room and turned the key; holding reproach at bay until she chose to come out and ignore it. In her innocent love of mystery and intrigue Aunt Emily reminds one of Stevenson. She would have played at “lantern bearers” with him, and given the

stealthy countersign under her breath, as no other living urchin!

She was "eternally preoccupied with death" as any of Pater's giant Florentines, but though the supernatural had the supreme hold on her imagination and conjecture, every lesser mystery was a panic and an ecstasy. If she could contrive to outwit domestic vigilance and smuggle a box of fresh-laid eggs to my Mother, on the sly, it savored to her of piracy and brigandage. She was averse to surveillance of every description and took pains to elude it in these little traffics of her heart as in the enigmas of her Being. "Give me liberty or give me death — but if you can, give me liberty!" was her frequent cry. She had a keen scent for the meanings hid beneath the goodly outside of diplomacy and watched for developments in home and foreign policies with surprising acumen. The Winter she was at Willard's, during her Father's Congressional career, she is said to have astonished his political friends by her insight and created quite a sensation by her wit, though the only story I recall now was

of her saying to a prim old Chief Justice of the Supremest sort, when the plum pudding on fire was offered — “Oh Sir, may one eat of hell fire with impunity, here?”

Physically timid at the least approach to a crisis in the day's event, her *mind* dared earth and heaven. That apocrypha and apocalypse met in her, explains her tendency so often mistaken for blasphemy by the superficial analyst.

The advance and retreat of her thought, her transition from arch to demure, from elfin to angelic, from soaring to drowning, her inescapable sense of tragedy, her inimitable perception of comedy, her breathless reverence and unabashed invasion upon the intimate affairs of Deity and hearsay of the Bible, made her a comrade to mettle inspiration and dazzle rivalry. Unlike the dullard, brilliancy was no effort for her. She revelled in the wings of her mind,—I had almost said the fins too,—so universal was her identification with every form of life and element of being. She usually liked men better than women because they were more stimulating. I can see her yet, stand-

ing in the spacious upper hall a Summer afternoon, finger on lip, and hear her say, as the feminine callers took their departure—"Listen! Hear them kiss, the traitors!" To most women she was a provoking puzzle. To her, in turn, most women were a form of triviality to be escaped when feasible.

But stupidity had no sex with her and I equally well remember her spying down upon a stranger sent to call upon her by a mutual friend, and dismissing him unreceived after one glance from her window, remarking—"His face is as handsome and as meaningless as the full moon." At another time she called me to peep at a new Professor recently come to the college, saying—"Look dear, he is pretty as a cloth Pink!" her mouth curling in derision as she uttered it and one hand motioning as if to throw the flower away. She had a dramatic way of throwing up her hands at the climax of a story or to punctuate one of her own flashes. It was entirely spontaneous, her spirit seemed merely playing through her body as the *Aurora borealis* through darkness. And since

there is no portrait of Aunt Emily, may I be pardoned if I try to give an idea of her external likeness? It has been often told that she wore white exclusively. She has said herself, in one of her letters to an inquisitive friend who had never seen her and importuned for a hint of her outward self, — that her eyes were the color of the sherry left in the glass by him to whom she wrote. Her hair was of that same warm bronze-chestnut hue that Titian immortalized, and she wore it parted on her brow and low in her neck, but always half covered by a velvet snood of the same tint; such as the Venetian painters loved to add as a final grace to the portraits of their beloved and beautiful women. Her cheek was like the petal of the jasmine, a velvety white never touched by a hint of color. Her red lips parted over very regular little teeth like the squirrels' and it was the rather long upper lip that gave to the mouth its asceticism, and betrayed the monastic tendency in her, of which she was probably quite unaware.

If this combines nature and art and mys-

ticism in one, too bewilderingly to reproduce any definite impression, it is the fault of that face,— as animate in my memory as it is still in my dreams.

In spite of an innate austerity of the senses, my Aunt had lovers, like Browning's roses — "all the way"— to the end; men of varied profession and attainment who wrote to her and came to see her, and whose letters she burned with a chivalry not all of them requited in kind. "Sister Sue" was her confidante and ally, from whose lips we heard many a hot or quaint tale when time had made them no perfidy. One of these in which we most delighted was of how Aunt Emily as a young lady, having been decorously driven to a funeral in Hadley, in the family barouche lined with cream-colored broadcloth, ran from the grave with a dashing cousin from Worcester, via a skittish black horse and worldly buggy, capping her infamy by returning through Sunderland and being in her room with the door locked when the family got home.

Nothing would be more delicious to me than

to repeat by name the list of those whom she bewitched. It included college boys, tutors, law students, the brothers of her girl friends,—several times their affianced bridegrooms even; and then the maturer friendships,—literary, Platonic, Plutonic; passages varying in intensity, and at least one passionate attachment whose tragedy was due to the integrity of the Lovers, who scrupled to take their bliss at another's cost.

She was not daily-bread. She was star-dust. Her solitude made her and was part of her. Taken from her distant sky she must have become a creature as different as fallen meteor from pulsing star. One may ask of the Sphinx, if life would not have been dearer to her, lived as other women lived it? To have been, in essence, more as other women were? Or if, in so doing and so being, she would have missed that inordinate compulsion, that inquisitive comprehension that made her Emily Dickinson? It is to ask again the old riddle of genius against every-day happiness. Had life or love been able to dissuade her from that “eter-

nal preoccupation with death" which thrall'd her — if she could have chosen — you urge, still unconvinced? But I feel that she could and did, and that nothing could have compensated her for the forfeit of that "single hound," her "own Identity."

MARTHA DICKINSON BIANCHI.



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TO SUE.

*ONE Sister have I in our house,  
And one a hedge away  
There's only one recorded  
But both belong to me.*

*One came the way that I came,  
And wore my last year's gown,  
The other, as a bird her nest,  
Builted our hearts among.*

*She did not sing as we did,  
It was a different tune,  
Herself to her a music —  
As Bumble-bee of June.*

*Today is far from childhood,  
But up and down the hills  
I held her hand the tighter,  
Which shortened all the miles.*

TO SUE.

*And still her hum the years among  
Deceives the Butterfly,  
Still in her eye the Violets lie  
Mouldered this many May.*

*I spilt the dew but took the morn,  
I chose this single Star  
From out the wide night's numbers,  
Sue — forevermore!*

— *Emilie.*

# THE SINGLE HOUND.

## I.

**A**DVENTURE most unto itself  
The Soul condemned to be;  
Attended by a Single Hound —  
Its own Identity.

## II.

THE Soul that hath a Guest,  
Doth seldom go abroad,  
Diviner Crowd at home  
Obliterate the need,  
And courtesy forbid  
A Host's departure, when  
Upon Himself be visiting  
The Emperor of Men!

III.

EXCEPT the smaller size, no Lives are round,  
These hurry to a sphere, and show, and end.  
The larger, slower grow, and later hang —  
The Summers of Hesperides are long.

## IV.

FAME is a fickle food  
Upon a shifting plate,  
Whose table once a Guest, but not  
The second time, is set.  
Whose crumbs the crows inspect,  
And with ironic caw  
Flap past it to the Farmer's corn;  
Men eat of it and die.

V.

THE right to perish might be thought  
An undisputed right,  
Attempt it, and the Universe upon the opposite  
Will concentrate its officers —  
You cannot even die,  
But Nature and Mankind must pause  
To pay you scrutiny.

## VI.

PERIL as a possession  
'Tis good to bear,  
Danger disintegrates satiety;  
There's Basis there  
Begets an awe,  
That searches Human Nature's creases  
As clean as Fire.

VII.

WHEN Etna basks and purrs,  
    Naples is more afraid  
Than when she shows her Garnet Tooth;  
Security is loud.

## VIII.

**R**EVERSE cannot befall that fine Prosperity  
Whose sources are interior.  
As soon Adversity  
A diamond overtake,  
In far Bolivian ground;  
Misfortune hath no implement  
Could mar it, if it found.

IX.

TO be alive is power,  
Existence in itself,  
Without a further function,  
Omnipotence enough.

To be alive and Will —  
'Tis able as a God!  
The Further of ourselves be what —  
Such being Finitude?

## X.

WITCHCRAFT has not a pedigree,  
'Tis early as our breath,  
And mourners meet it going out  
The moment of our death.

XI.

EXHILARATION is the Breeze  
That lifts us from the ground,  
And leaves us in another place  
Whose statement is not found;  
Returns us not, but after time  
We soberly descend,  
A little newer for the term  
Upon enchanted ground.

## XII.

NO romance sold unto,  
Could so enthrall a man  
As the perusal of  
His individual one.  
'Tis fiction's, to dilute  
To plausibility  
*Our* novel, when 'tis small enough  
To credit,— 'tis n't true!

XIII.

IF what we could were what we would —  
Criterion be small;  
It is the Ultimate of talk  
The impotence to tell.

## XIV.

PERCEPTION of an  
Object costs  
Precise the Object's loss.  
Perception in itself a gain  
Replying to its price;  
The Object Absolute is nought,  
Perception sets it fair,  
And then upbraids a Perfectness  
That situates so far.

XV.

NO other can reduce  
Our mortal consequence,  
Like the remembering it be nought  
A period from hence.  
But contemplation for  
Cotemporaneous nought  
Our single competition;  
Jehovah's estimate.

## XVI.

THE blunder is to estimate,—  
“Eternity is *Then*,”  
We say, as of a station.  
Meanwhile he is so near,  
He joins me in my ramble,  
Divides abode with me,  
No friend have I that so persists  
As this Eternity.

XVII.

MY Wheel is in the dark,—  
I cannot see a spoke,  
Yet know its dripping feet  
Go round and round.

My foot is on the tide —  
An unfrequented road,  
Yet have all roads  
A “clearing” at the end.

Some have resigned the Loom,  
Some in the busy tomb  
Find quaint employ,  
Some with new, stately feet  
Pass royal through the gate,  
Flinging the problem back at you and I.

## XVIII.

THERE is another Loneliness  
That many die without,  
Not want or friend occasions it,  
Or circumstances or lot.

But nature sometimes, sometimes thought,  
And whoso it befall  
Is richer than could be divulged  
By mortal numeral.

XIX.

SO gay a flower bereaved the mind  
As if it were a woe,  
Is Beauty an affliction, then?  
Tradition ought to know.

## XX.

GLORY is that bright tragic thing,  
That for an instant  
Means Dominion,  
Warms some poor name  
That never felt the sun,  
Gently replacing  
In oblivion.

XXI.

THE missing All prevented me  
From missing minor things.  
If nothing larger than a World's  
Departure from a hinge,  
Or Sun's extinction be observed,  
'Twas not so large that I  
Could lift my forehead from my work  
For curiosity.

## XXII.

HIS mind, of man a secret makes,  
I meet him with a start,  
He carries a circumference  
In which I have no part,  
Or even if I deem I do —  
He otherwise may know.  
Impregnable to inquest,  
However neighborly.

XXIII.

THE suburbs of a secret  
A strategist should keep,  
Better than on a dream intrude  
To scrutinize the sleep.

## XXIV.

THE difference between despair  
And fear, is like the one  
Between the instant of a wreck,  
And when the wreck has been.

The mind is smooth, — no motion —  
Contented as the eye  
Upon the forehead of a Bust,  
That knows it cannot see.

XXV.

THERE is a solitude of space,  
A solitude of sea,  
A solitude of death, but these  
Society shall be,  
Compared with that profounder site,  
That polar privacy,  
A Soul admitted to Itself:  
Finite Infinity.

## XXVI.

THE props assist the house  
Until the house is built,  
And then the props withdraw —  
And adequate, erect,  
The house supports itself;  
Ceasing to recollect  
The auger and the carpenter.  
Just such a retrospect  
Hath the perfected life,  
A past of plank and nail,  
And slowness, — then the scaffolds drop —  
Affirming it a soul.

XXVII.

THE gleam of an heroic act,  
Such strange illumination —  
The Possible's slow fuse is lit  
By the Imagination!

## XXVIII.

OF Death the sharpest function,  
That, just as we discern,  
The Excellence defies us;  
Securest gathered then  
The fruit perverse to plucking,  
But leaning to the sight  
With the ecstatic limit  
Of unobtained Delight.

XXIX.

DOWN Time's quaint stream  
Without an oar,  
We are enforced to sail,  
Our Port — a secret —  
Our Perchance — a gale.  
What Skipper would  
Incur the risk,  
What Buccaneer would ride,  
Without a surety from the wind  
Or schedule of the tide?

## XXX.

I BET with every Wind that blew, till Nature  
in chagrin  
Employed a *Fact* to visit me and scuttle my  
Balloon!

XXXI.

THE Future never spoke,  
Nor will he, like the Dumb,  
Reveal by sign or syllable  
Of his profound To-come.  
But when the news be ripe,  
Presents it in the Act —  
Forestalling preparation  
Escape or substitute.  
Indifferent to him  
The Dower as the Doom,  
His office but to execute  
Fate's Telegram to him.

## XXXII.

TWO lengths has every day,  
    Its absolute extent —  
And area superior  
By hope or heaven lent.  
Eternity will be  
Velocity, or pause,  
At fundamental signals  
From fundamental laws.  
To die, is not to go —  
On doom's consummate chart  
No territory new is staked,  
Remain thou as thou art.

XXXIII.

THE Soul's superior instants  
Occur to Her alone,  
When friend and earth's occasion  
Have infinite withdrawn.

Or she, Herself, ascended  
To too remote a height,  
For lower recognition  
Than Her Omnipotent.

This mortal abolition  
Is seldom, but as fair  
As Apparition — subject  
To autocratic air.

Eternity's disclosure  
To favorites, a few,  
Of the Colossal substance  
Of immortality.

## XXXIV.

NATURE is what we see,  
The Hill, the Afternoon —  
Squirrel, Eclipse, the Bumble-bee,  
Nay — Nature is Heaven.

Nature is what we hear,  
The Bobolink, the Sea —  
Thunder, the Cricket —  
Nay, — Nature is Harmony.

Nature is what we know  
But have no art to say,  
So impotent our wisdom is  
To Her simplicity.

XXXV.

AH, Teneriffe!  
Retreating Mountain!  
Purples of Ages pause for you,  
Sunset reviews her Sapphire Regiment,  
Day drops you her red Adieu!

Still, clad in your mail of ices,  
Thigh of granite and thew of steel —  
Heedless, alike, of pomp or parting,  
Ah, Teneriffe!

I'm kneeling still.

## XXXVI.

SHE died at play,  
Gambolled away  
Her lease of spotted hours,  
Then sank as gaily as a Turk  
Upon a couch of flowers.  
Her ghost strolled softly o'er the hill  
Yesterday and today,  
Her vestments as the silver fleece,  
Her countenance as spray.

XXXVII.

“**M**ORNING” means “Milking” to the  
Farmer,  
Dawn to the Apennines —  
Dice to the Maid.  
“Morning” means just Chance to the Lover —  
Just Revelation to the Beloved.  
Epicures date a breakfast by it!  
Heroes a battle,  
The Miller a flood,  
Faint-going eyes their lapse  
From sighing,  
Faith, the Experiment of our Lord!

## XXXVIII.

A LITTLE madness in the Spring  
Is wholesome even for the King,  
But God be with the Clown,  
Who ponders this tremendous scene —  
This whole experiment of green,  
As if it were his own!

XXXIX.

I CAN'T tell you, but you feel it —  
 Nor can you tell me,  
 Saints with vanished slate and pencil  
 Solve our April day.

Sweeter than a vanished Frolic  
 From a vanished Green!  
 Swifter than the hoofs of Horsemen  
 Round a ledge of Dream!

Modest, let us walk among it,  
 With our "faces veiled,"  
 As they say polite Archangels  
 Do, in meeting God.

Not for *me* to prate about it,  
 Not for *you* to say  
 To some fashionable Lady —  
 "Charming April Day!"

Rather Heaven's "Peter Parley,"  
By which, Children — slow —  
To sublimer recitations  
Are prepared to go!

XL.

SOME Days retired from the rest  
In soft distinction lie,  
The Day that a companion came —  
Or was obliged to die.

## XLI.

LIKE Men and Women shadows walk  
Upon the hills today,  
With here and there a mighty bow,  
Or trailing courtesy  
To Neighbors, doubtless, of their own;  
Not quickened to perceive  
Minuter landscape, as Ourselves  
And Boroughs where we live.

XLII.

THE butterfly obtains  
But little sympathy,  
Though favorably mentioned  
In Entomology.  
Because he travels freely  
And wears a proper coat,  
The circumspect are certain  
That he is dissolute.  
Had he the homely scutcheon of modest Industry,  
'Twere fitter certifying for Immortality.

## XLIII.

BEAUTY crowds me till I die,  
Beauty, mercy have on me!  
But if I expire today,  
Let it be in sight of thee.

XLIV.

WE spy the Forests and the Hills,  
The tents to Nature's Show,  
Mistake the outside for the in  
And mention what we saw.

Could Commentators on the sign  
Of Nature's Caravan  
Obtain "admission," as a child,  
Some Wednesday afternoon?

## XLV.

I NEVER told the buried gold  
Upon the hill that lies,  
I saw the sun, his plunder done,  
Crouch low to guard his prize.

He stood as near, as stood you here,  
A pace had been between —  
Did but a snake bisect the brake,  
My life had forfeit been.

That was a wondrous booty,  
I hope 'twas honest gained —  
Those were the finest ingots  
That ever kissed the spade.

Whether to keep the secret —  
Whether to reveal —  
Whether, while I ponder  
Kidd may sudden sail —

Could a Shrewd advise me  
We might e'en divide —  
Should a Shrewd betray me —  
“Atropos” decide!

## XLVI.

THE largest fire ever known  
Occurs each afternoon,  
Discovered is without surprise,  
Proceeds without concern:  
Consumes, and no report to men,  
An Occidental town,  
Rebuilt another morning  
To be again burned down.

XLVII.

BLOOM upon the Mountain, stated,  
Blameless of a name.  
Efflorescence of a Sunset —  
Reproduced, the same.

Seed, had I, my purple sowing  
Should endow the Day,  
Not a tropic of the twilight  
Show itself away.

Who for tilling, to the Mountain  
Come, and disappear —  
Whose be Her renown, or fading,  
Witness, is not here.

While I state — the solemn petals  
Far as North and East,  
Far as South and West expanding,  
Culminate in rest.

And the Mountain to the Evening  
Fit His countenance,  
Indicating by no muscle  
The Experience.

XLVIII.

MARCH is the month of expectation,  
The things we do not know,  
The Persons of prognostication  
Are coming now.  
We try to sham becoming firmness,  
But pompous joy  
Betrays us, as his first betrothal  
Betrays a boy.

## XLIX.

THE Duties of the Wind are few —  
To cast the Ships at sea,  
Establish March,  
The Floods escort,  
And usher Liberty.

L.

THE Winds drew off  
Like hungry dogs  
Defeated of a bone.  
Through fissures in  
Volcanic cloud  
The yellow lightning shown.  
The trees held up  
Their mangled limbs  
Like animals in pain,  
When Nature falls  
Upon herself,  
Beware an Austrian!

## LI.

I THINK that the root of the Wind is Water,  
It would not sound so deep  
Were it a firmamental product,  
Airs no Oceans keep —  
Mediterranean intonations,  
To a Current's ear  
There is a maritime conviction  
In the atmosphere.

LII.

SO, from the`mould,  
Scarlet and gold  
Many a Bulb will rise,  
Hidden away cunningly  
From sagacious eyes.  
So, from cocoon  
Many a Worm  
Leap so Highland gay,  
Peasants like me —  
Peasants like thee,  
Gaze perplexedly.

## LIII.

THE long sigh of the Frog  
Upon a Summer's day,  
Enacts intoxication  
Upon the revery.  
But his receding swell  
Substantiates a peace,  
That makes the ear inordinate  
For corporal release.

LIV.

A CAP of lead across the sky  
Was tight and surly drawn,  
We could not find the mighty Face,  
The Figure was withdrawn.

A chill came up as from a shaft,  
Our noon became a well,  
A Thunder storm combines the charms  
Of Winter and of Hell.

## LV.

I SEND two Sunsets —  
Day and I in competition ran,  
I finished two, and several stars,  
While He was making one.

His own is ampler —  
But, as I was saying to a friend,  
Mine is the more convenient  
To carry in the hand.

[Sent with brilliant flowers.]

LVI.

OF this is Day composed —  
A morning and a noon,  
A Revelry unspeakable  
And then a gay Unknown;  
Whose Pomps allure and spurn —  
And dower and deprive,  
And penury for glory  
Remedilessly leave.

## LVII.

THE Hills erect their purple heads,  
The Rivers lean to see —  
Yet Man has not, of all the throng,  
A curiosity.

LVIII.

LIGHTLY stepped a yellow star  
To its lofty place,  
Loosed the Moon her silver hat  
From her lustral face.  
All of evening softly lit  
As an astral hall —  
“Father,” I observed to Heaven,  
“You are punctual.”

## LIX.

THE Moon upon her fluent route  
Defiant of a road,  
The stars Etruscan argument,  
Substantiate a God.  
If Aims impel these Astral Ones,  
The Ones allowed to know,  
Know that which makes them as forgot  
As Dawn forgets them now.

LX.

LIKE some old fashioned miracle  
When Summertime is done,  
Seems Summer's recollection  
And the affairs of June.

As infinite tradition  
As Cinderella's bays,  
Or little John of Lincoln Green,  
Or Bluebeard's galleries.

Her Bees have a fictitious hum,  
Her Blossoms, like a dream,  
Elate — until we almost weep  
So plausible they seem.

Her Memories like strains — review —  
When Orchestra is dumb,  
The Violin in baize replaced  
And Ear and Heaven numb.

## LXI.

**G**LOWING is her Bonnet,  
Glowing is her Cheek,  
Glowing is her Kirtle,  
Yet she cannot speak!

Better, as the Daisy  
From the Summer hill,  
Vanish unrecorded,  
Save by tearful Rill,

Save by loving Sunrise  
Looking for her face,  
Save by feet unnumbered  
Pausing at the place!

LXII.

FOREVER cherished be the tree,  
Whose apple Winter warm,  
Enticed to breakfast from the sky  
Two Gabriels yestermorn;  
They registered in Nature's book  
As Robin — Sire and Son,  
But angels have that modest way  
To screen them from renown.

## LXIII.

THE Ones that disappeared are back,  
The Phoebe and the Crow,  
Precisely as in March is heard  
The curtness of the Jay —  
Be this an Autumn or a Spring?  
My wisdom loses way,  
One side of me the nuts are ripe —  
The other side is May.

LXIV.

THOSE final Creatures, — who they are —  
That, faithful to the close,  
Administer her ecstasy,  
But just the Summer knows.

## LXV.

SUMMER begins to have the look,  
Peruser of enchanting Book  
Reluctantly, but sure, perceives —  
A gain upon the backward leaves.

Autumn begins to be inferred  
By millinery of the cloud,  
Or deeper color in the shawl  
That wraps the everlasting hill.

The eye begins its avarice,  
A meditation chastens speech,  
Some Dyer of a distant tree  
Resumes his gaudy industry.

Conclusion is the course of all,  
*Almost* to be perennial,  
And then elude stability  
Recalls to immortality.

LXVI.

A PROMPT, executive Bird is the Jay,  
Bold as a Bailiff's hymn,  
Brittle and brief in quality —  
Warrant in every line;  
Sitting a bough like a Brigadier,  
Confident and straight,  
Much is the mien  
Of him in March  
As a Magistrate.

## LXVII.

LIKE brooms of steel  
The Snow and Wind  
Had swept the Winter Street,  
The House was hooked,  
The Sun sent out  
Faint Deputies of heat —  
Where rode the Bird  
The Silence tied  
His ample, plodding Steed,  
The Apple in the cellar snug  
Was all the one that played.

LXVIII.

**T**HESE are the days that Reindeer love  
And pranks the Northern star,  
This is the Sun's objective  
And Finland of the year.

## LXIX.

FOLLOW wise Orion  
Till you lose your eye,  
Dazzlingly decamping  
He is just as high.

LXX.

I N Winter, in my room,  
I came upon a worm,  
Pink, lank, and warm.  
But as he was a worm  
And worms presume,  
Not quite with him at home —  
Secured him by a string  
To something neighboring,  
And went along.

A trifle afterward  
A thing occurred,  
I'd not believe it if I heard —  
But state with creeping blood;  
A snake, with mottles rare,  
Surveyed my chamber floor,  
In feature as the worm before,  
But ringed with power.  
The very string

With which I tied him, too,  
When he was mean and new,  
That string was there.

I shrank — “How fair you are!”  
Propitiation’s claw —  
“Afraid,” he hissed,  
“Of me?”  
“No cordiality?”  
He fathomed me.

Then, to a rhythm slim  
Secreted in his form,  
As patterns swim,  
Projected him.

That time I flew,  
Both eyes his way,  
Lest he pursue —  
Nor ever ceased to run,  
Till, in a distant town,  
Towns on from mine —  
I sat me down;  
This was a dream.

LXXI.

NOT any sunny tone  
From any fervent zone  
Finds entrance there.  
Better a grave of Balm  
Toward human nature's home,  
And Robins near,  
Than a stupendous Tomb  
Proclaiming to the gloom  
How dead we are.

## LXXII.

FOR Death,— or rather  
For the things 'twill buy,  
These put away  
Life's opportunity.  
The things that Death will buy  
Are Room,— Escape  
From Circumstances,  
And a Name.  
How gifts of Life  
With Death's gifts will compare,  
We know not —  
For the rates stop Here.

LXXIII.

**D**RIPPED into the  
Ether Acre!  
Wearing the sod gown —  
Bonnet of Everlasting laces —  
Brooch frozen on!  
Horses of blonde —  
And coach of silver,  
Baggage a strapped Pearl!  
Journey of Down  
And whip of Diamond —  
Riding to meet the Earl!

## LXXIV.

THIS quiet Dust was Gentlemen and Ladies,  
And Lads and Girls;  
Was laughter and ability and sighing,  
And frocks and curls.  
This passive place a Summer's nimble mansion,  
Where Bloom and Bees  
Fulfilled their Oriental Circuit,  
Then ceased like these.

LXXV.

'TWAS comfort in her dying room  
To hear the living clock,  
A short relief to have the wind  
Walk boldly up and knock,  
Diversion from the dying theme  
To hear the children play,  
But wrong, the mere  
That these could live,—  
And This of ours must die!

## LXXVI.

TOO cold is this  
To warm with sun,  
Too stiff to bended be,  
To joint this agate were a feat  
Outstaring masonry.  
How went the agile kernel out —  
Contusion of the husk,  
Nor rip, nor wrinkle indicate, —  
But just an Asterisk.

LXXVII.

I WATCHED her face to see which way  
She took the awful news,  
Whether she died before she heard —  
Or in protracted bruise  
Remained a few short years with us,  
Each heavier than the last —  
A further afternoon to fail,  
As Flower at fall of Frost.

## LXXVIII.

TODAY or this noon  
She dwelt so close,  
I almost touched her;  
Tonight she lies  
Past neighborhood —  
And bough and steeple —  
Now past surmise.

LXXIX.

I SEE thee better in the dark,  
I do not need a light.  
The love of thee a prism be  
Excelling violet.

I see thee better for the years  
That hunch themselves between,  
The miner's lamp sufficient be  
To nullify the mine.

And in the grave I see thee best —  
Its little panels be  
A-glow, all ruddy with the light  
I held so high for thee!

What need of day to those whose dark  
Hath so surpassing sun,  
It seem it be continually  
At the meridian?

## LXXX.

**L**OW at my problem bending,  
Another problem comes,  
Larger than mine, serener,  
Involving statelier sums;  
I check my busy pencil,  
My ciphers slip away,  
Wherefore, my baffled fingers,  
Time Eternity?

LXXXI.

IF pain for peace prepares,  
Lo the "Augustan" years  
Our feet await!

If Springs from Winter rise,  
Can the Anemone's  
Be reckoned up?

If night stands first, then noon,  
To gird us for the sun,  
What gaze —

When, from a thousand skies,  
On our developed eyes  
Noons blaze!

## LXXXII.

**I** FIT for them,  
I seek the dark till I am thorough fit.  
The labor is a solemn one,  
With this sufficient sweet —  
That abstinence as mine produce  
A purer good for them,  
If I succeed, —  
If not, I had  
The transport of the Aim.

LXXXIII.

NOT one by Heaven defrauded stay,  
Although He seem to steal,  
He restitutes in some sweet way.  
Secreted in His will.

## LXXXIV.

THE feet of people walking home  
In gayer sandals go,  
The Crocus, till she rises,  
The Vassal of the Snow —  
The lips at Hallelujah!  
Long years of practice bore,  
Till bye and bye these Bargemen  
Walked singing on the shore.

Pearls are the Diver's farthings  
Extorted from the Sea,  
Pinions the Seraph's wagon,  
Pedestrians once, as we —  
Night is the morning's canvas,  
Larceny, legacy,  
Death but our rapt attention  
To immortality.

My figures fail to tell me  
How far the village lies,  
Whose Peasants are the angels,  
Whose Cantons dot the skies,  
My Classics veil their faces,  
My Faith that dark adores,  
Which from its solemn Abbeys  
Such resurrection pours!

## LXXXV.

WE should not mind so small a flower,  
Except it quiet bring  
Our little garden that we lost  
Back to the lawn again.  
So spicy her Carnations red,  
So drunken reel her Bees,  
So silver steal a hundred Flutes  
From out a hundred trees,  
That whoso sees this little flower,  
By faith may clear behold  
The Bobolinks around the throne,  
And Dandelions gold.

LXXXVI.

TO the staunch Dust we safe commit thee;  
Tongue if it hath, inviolate to thee —  
Silence denote and Sanctity enforce thee,  
Passenger of Infinity!

## LXXXVII.

HER "Last Poems"—  
Poets ended,  
Silver perished with her tongue,  
Not on record bubbled other  
Flute, or Woman, so divine;  
Not unto its Summer morning  
Robin uttered half the tune —  
Gushed too free for the adoring,  
From the Anglo-Florentine.  
Late the praise —  
'Tis dull conferring  
On a Head too high to crown,  
Diadem or Ducal showing,  
Be its Grave sufficient sign.  
Yet if we, no Poet's kinsman,  
Suffocate with easy woe,  
What and if ourself a Bridegroom,  
Put Her down, in Italy?

[Written after the death of Mrs. Browning in 1861.]

LXXXVIII.

**I**MMURED in Heaven! What a Cell!  
Let every bondage be,  
Thou Sweetest of the Universe,  
Like that which ravished thee!

## LXXXIX.

I'M thinking of that other morn,  
When Cerements let go,  
And Creatures clad in Victory  
Go up in two by two!

XC.

THE overtakelessness of those  
Who have accomplished Death,  
Majestic is to me beyond  
The majesties of Earth.

The soul her "not at Home"  
Inscribes upon the flesh,  
And takes her fair aerial gait  
Beyond the hope of touch.

## XCI.

THE Look of Thee, what is it like?  
Hast thou a hand or foot,  
Or mansion of Identity,  
And what is thy Pursuit?

Thy fellows, — are they Realms or Themes?  
Hast thou Delight or Fear  
Or Longing, — and is that for us  
Or values more severe?

Let change transfuse all other traits,  
Enact all other blame,  
But deign this least certificate —  
That thou shalt be the same.

XCII.

THE Devil, had he fidelity, —  
Would be the finest friend —  
Because he has ability,  
But Devils cannot mend.  
Perfidy is the virtue  
That would he but resign, —  
The Devil, so amended,  
Were durably divine.

## XCIII.

PAPA above!  
                    Regard a Mouse  
O'erpowered by the Cat;  
Reserve within thy kingdom  
A "mansion" for the Rat!

Snug in seraphic cupboards  
To nibble all the day,  
While unsuspecting cycles  
Wheel pompously away.

XCIV.

NOT when we know  
The Power accosts,  
The garment of Surprise  
Was all our timid Mother wore  
At Home, in Paradise.

## XCV.

ELIJAH'S wagon knew no thill,  
Was innocent of wheel,  
Elijah's horses as unique  
As was his vehicle.  
Elijah's journey to portray,  
Expire with him the skill,  
Who justified Elijah,  
In feats inscrutable.

XCVI.

“REMEMBER me,” implored the Thief —  
Oh magnanimity!  
“My Visitor in Paradise  
I give thee Guaranty.”

That courtesy will fair remain,  
When the delight is dust,  
With which we cite this mightiest case  
Of compensated Trust.

Of All, we are allowed to hope,  
But Affidavit stands  
That this was due, where some, we fear,  
Are unexpected friends.

## XCVII.

TO this apartment deep  
No ribaldry may creep;  
Untroubled this abode  
By any man but God.

XCVIII.

“SOWN in dishonor?”  
Ah! Indeed!  
May this dishonor be?  
If I were half so fine myself,  
I’d notice nobody!

“Sown in corruption?”  
By no means!  
Apostle is askew;  
Corinthians 1. 15, narrates  
A circumstance or two!

## XCIX.

WHO is it seeks my pillow nights?  
With plain inspecting face,  
“Did you, or did you not?” to ask,  
’Tis Conscience, childhood’s nurse.

With martial hand she strokes the hair  
Upon my wincing head,  
“All rogues shall have their part in”—  
What —  
The Phosphorus of God.

C.

**H**IS Cheek is his Biographer —  
As long as he can blush,  
Perdition is Opprobrium;  
Past that, he sins in peace.  
Thief

## CI.

“**H**EAVENLY Father,” take to thee  
The supreme iniquity,  
Fashioned by thy candid hand  
In a moment contraband.  
Though to trust us seem to us  
More respectful — “we are dust.”  
We apologize to Thee  
For Thine own Duplicity.

CII.

THE sweets of Pillage can be known  
To no one but the Thief,  
Compassion for Integrity  
Is his divinest Grief.

## CIII.

A LITTLE over Jordan,  
As Genesis record,  
An Angel and a Wrestler  
Did wrestle long and hard.

Till, morning touching mountain,  
And Jacob waxing strong,  
The Angel begged permission  
To breakfast and return.

Not so, quoth wily Jacob  
And girt his loins anew,  
“Until thou bless me, stranger!”  
The which acceded to:

Light swung the silver fleeces  
Peniel hills among,  
And the astonished Wrestler  
Found he had worsted God!

CIV.

DUST is the only secret,  
Death the only one  
You cannot find out all about  
In his native town:  
Nobody knew his father,  
Never was a boy,  
Hadn't any playmates  
Or early history.

Industrious, laconic,  
Punctual, sedate,  
Bolder than a Brigand,  
Swifter than a Fleet,  
Builds like a bird too,  
Christ robs the nest —  
Robin after robin  
Smuggled to rest!

## CV.

AMBITION cannot find him,  
Affection doesn't know  
How many leagues of Nowhere  
Lie between them now.  
Yesterday undistinguished —  
Eminent today,  
For our mutual honor —  
Immortality!

CVI.

EDEN is that old fashioned House  
We dwell in every day,  
Without suspecting our abode  
Until we drive away.  
How fair, on looking back, the Day  
We sauntered from the door,  
Unconscious our returning  
Discover it no more.

## CVII.

CANDOR, my tepid Friend,  
Come not to play with me!  
The Myrrhs and Mochas of the Mind  
Are its Iniquity.

CVIII.

SPEECH is a sympton of affection,  
And Silence one,  
The perfectest communication  
Is heard of none —  
Exists and its endorsement  
Is had within —  
Behold! said the Apostle,  
Yet had not seen.

## CIX.

WHO were "the Father and the Son" —  
We pondered when a child,  
And what had they to do with us —  
And when portentous told  
With inference appalling,  
By Childhood fortified,  
We thought, "at least they are no worse  
Than they have been described."

Who are "the Father and the Son" —  
Did we demand today,  
"The Father and the Son" himself  
Would doubtless specify,  
But had they the felicity  
When we desired to know,  
We better Friends had been, perhaps,  
Than time ensue to be.

We start, to learn that we believe  
But once, entirely —

Belief, it does not fit so well  
When altered frequently.  
We blush, that Heaven if we achieve,  
Event ineffable —  
We shall have shunned, until ashamed  
To own the Miracle.

## CX.

THAT Love is all there is,  
Is all we know of Love;  
It is enough, the freight should be  
Proportioned to the groove.

## CXI.

THE luxury to apprehend  
The luxury 'twould be  
To look at thee a single time,  
An Epicure of me,  
In whatsoever Presence, makes,  
Till, for a further food  
I scarcely recollect to starve,  
So first am I supplied.  
The luxury to meditate  
The luxury it was  
To banquet on thy Countenance,  
A sumptuousness bestows  
On plainer days,  
Whose table, far as  
Certainty can see,  
Is laden with a single crumb ---  
The consciousness of Thee.

## CXII.

THE Sea said "Come" to the Brook,  
The Brook said "Let me grow!"  
The Sea said "Then you will be a Sea —  
I want a brook, Come now!"

CXIII.

ALL I may, if small,  
Do it not display  
Larger for its Totalness?  
'Tis economy  
To bestow a world  
And withhold a star,  
Utmost is munificence;  
Less, though larger, Poor.

## CXIV.

LOVE reckons by itself alone,  
“As large as I” relate the Sun  
To one who never felt it blaze,  
Itself is all the like it has.

CXV.

THE inundation of the Spring  
Submerges every soul,  
It sweeps the tenement away  
But leaves the water whole.  
In which the Soul, at first alarmed,  
Seeks furtive for its shore,  
But acclimated, gropes no more  
For that Peninsular.

## CXVI.

NO Autumn's intercepting chill  
Appalls this Tropic Breast,  
But African exuberance  
And Asiatic rest.

CXVII.

VOLCANOES be in Sicily  
And South America,  
I judge from my geography.  
Volcanoes nearer here,  
A lava step, at any time,  
Am I inclined to climb,  
A crater I may contemplate,  
Vesuvius at home.

## CXVIII.

DISTANCE is not the realm of Fox,  
Nor by relay as Bird;  
Abated, Distance is until  
Thyself, Beloved!

CXIX.

THE treason of an accent  
Might vilify the Joy —  
To breathe, — corrode the rapture  
Of Sanctity to be.

## CXX.

HOW destitute is he  
Whose Gold is firm,  
Who finds it every time,  
The small stale sum —  
When Love, with but a pence  
Will so display,  
As is a disrespect to India!

CXXI.

C<sup>R</sup>ISIS is sweet and, set the Heart  
Upon the hither side,  
Has dowers of prospective  
Surrendered by the Tried.  
Inquire of the closing Rose  
Which Rapture she preferred,  
And she will tell you, sighing,  
The transport of the Bud.

## CXXII.

TO tell the beauty would decrease,  
To state the Spell demean,  
There is a syllableless sea  
Of which it is the sign.

My will endeavours for its word  
And fails, but entertains  
A rapture as of legacies —  
Of introspective mines.

CXXIII.

TO love thee, year by year,  
    May less appear  
Than sacrifice and cease.  
However, Dear,  
Forever might be short  
I thought, to show,  
And so I pieced it with a flower now.

## CXXIV.

I SHOWED her heights she never saw —  
“Would’st climb?” I said,  
She said “Not so” —  
“With me?” I said, “With me?”  
I showed her secrets  
Morning’s nest,  
The rope that Nights were put across —  
And *now*, “Would’st have me for a Guest?”  
She could not find her yes —  
And then, I brake my life, and Lo!  
A light for her, did solemn glow,  
The larger, as her face withdrew —  
And could she, further, “No?”

CXXV.

ON my volcano grows the grass, —  
A meditative spot,  
An area for a bird to choose  
Would be the general thought.

How red the fire reeks below,  
How insecure the sod —  
Did I disclose, would populate  
With awe my solitude.

## CXXVI.

**I**F I could tell how glad I was,  
I should not be so glad,  
But when I cannot make the Force  
Nor mould it into word,  
I know it is a sign  
That new Dilemma be  
From mathematics further off,  
Than from Eternity.

CXXVII.

HER Grace is all she has,  
And that, so vast displays,  
One Art, to recognize, must be,  
Another Art to praise.

## CXXVIII.

NO matter where the Saints abide,  
They make their circuit fair;  
Behold how great a Firmament  
Accompanies a star!

CXXIX.

TO see her is a picture,  
To hear her is a tune,  
To know her an intemperance  
As innocent as June;  
By which to be undone  
Is dearer than Redemption —  
Which never to receive,  
Makes mockery of melody  
It might have been to live.

## CXXX.

SO set its sun in thee,  
What day is dark to me —  
What distance far,  
So I the ships may see  
That touch how seldomly  
Thy shore?

CXXXI.

HAD this one day not been,  
Or could it cease to be —  
How smitten, how superfluous  
Were every other day!

Lest Love should value less  
What Loss would value more,  
Had it the stricken privilege —  
It cherishes before.

## CXXXII.

THAT she forgot me was the least,  
I felt it second pain,  
That I was worthy to forget  
Was most I thought upon.

Faithful, was all that I could boast,  
But Constancy became,  
To her, by her innominate,  
A something like a shame.

CXXXIII.

THE incidents of Love  
Are more than its Events,  
Investments best expositor  
Is the minute per cents.

## CXXXIV.

JUST so, Jesus raps — He does not weary —  
Last at the knocker and first at the bell,  
Then on divinest tiptoe standing  
Might He out-spy the lady's soul.  
When He retires, chilled and weary —  
It will be ample time for me;  
Patient, upon the steps, until then —  
Heart, I am knocking low at Thee!

CXXXV.

SAFE Despair it is that raves,  
Agony is frugal,  
Puts itself severe away  
For its own perusal.

Garrisoned no Soul can be  
In the front of Trouble,  
Love is one, not aggregate,  
Nor is Dying double.

## CXXXVI.

THE Face we choose to miss,  
Be it but for a day —  
As absent as a hundred years  
When it has rode away.

CXXXVII.

OF so divine a loss  
We enter but the gain,  
Indemnity for loneliness  
That such a bliss has been.

## CXXXVIII.

THE healed Heart shows its shallow scar  
    With confidential moan,  
Not mended by Mortality  
Are fabrics truly torn.  
To go its convalescent way  
So shameless is to see,  
More genuine were Perfidy  
Than such Fidelity.

CXXXIX.

TO pile like Thunder to its close,  
Then crumble grand away,  
While everything created hid —  
This would be Poetry:  
Or Love, — the two coeval came —  
We both and neither prove,  
Experience either, and consume —  
For none see God and live.

## CXL.

THE Stars are old, that stood for me —  
The West a little worn,  
Yet newer glows the only Gold  
I ever cared to earn —  
Presuming on that lone result  
Her infinite disdain,  
But vanquished her with my defeat,  
'Twas Victory was slain.

CXLI.

**A**LL circumstances are the frame  
In which His Face is set,  
All Latitudes exist for His  
Sufficient continent.

The light His Action and the dark  
The Leisure of His Will,  
In Him Existence serve, or set  
A force illegible.

## CXLII.

I DID not reach thee,  
But my feet slip nearer every day;  
Three Rivers and a Hill to cross,  
One Desert and a Sea —  
I shall not count the journey one  
When I am telling thee.

Two deserts — but the year is cold  
So that will help the sand —  
One desert crossed, the second one  
Will feel as cool as land.  
Sahara is too little price  
To pay for thy Right hand!

The sea comes last. Step merry, feet!  
So short have we to go  
To play together we are prone,  
But we must labor now,

The last shall be the lightest load  
That we have had to draw.

The Sun goes crooked — that is night —  
Before he makes the bend  
We must have passed the middle sea,  
Almost we wish the end  
Were further off — too great it seems  
So near the Whole to stand.

We step like plush, we stand like snow —  
The waters murmur now,  
Three rivers and the hill are passed,  
Two deserts and the sea!  
Now Death usurps my premium  
And gets the look at Thee.













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